



City of Sugar Land

Sugar Land's Community Newsletter

Spring 2000

Celebrating our 40 year anniversary

Getting a Sense of the Census

Something big, really big, has arrived in Sugar Land. It affects where you drive, work, and shop. It also influences education, health care, and community activities in the area. This really big event is called Census 2000.

What is Census 2000?

Census 2000 is a form that all Americans across the nation are being asked to complete. It contains a series of questions about housing and demographics.

Why is the census so important?

The census information enables local decision makers to better understand the needs of the community and to improve area programs and services such as schools, hospitals, roads, and the like.

When?

The deadline for returning the forms is April 11. After that date, enumerators will begin knocking on doors, literally, for those who do not return the form. Be sure to ask for identification.

Who?

One person from each household fills out the questionnaire. The goal is to count every resident in Sugar Land, regardless of his or her homeowner or renter status.

Is the census confidential?

Yes! By law, individuals' responses to both forms are strictly confidential. The Census Bureau cannot share your responses with any other government agency, including welfare agencies, the Internal Revenue Service, courts, police, and the Immigration and Naturalization Service.



Happy Birthday, Sugar Land!

As Sugar Land celebrates its 40th birthday, the City opens a unique and recreationally diverse park for residents... the Oyster Creek Park, which is accessible from Lost Creek Park or Highway 6.

Oyster Creek Park is the latest and greatest addition to Sugar Land's Park System. Associated with the Park is a new 2.25-mile asphalt trail that runs between Lexington Boulevard and Dulles Avenue, along Oyster Creek. It also includes a lighted half-mile loop around Oyster Creek Park and a lighted 0.9-mile trail around Lost Creek Park. The Park can be accessed from Highway 6, while Oyster Creek Trail can be accessed from Highway 6, Lexington Boulevard, Dulles Avenue, and Lost Creek Park. The Park soon will have a water feature, amphitheater, and extensive landscaping.

"The facility serves as Sugar Land's version of Houston's Memorial Park," according to Parks and Recreation Director Lemuel Randolph. "It will be a venue for the community to exercise, relax and enjoy family activities in a natural setting nestled quietly amidst a fast developing commercial and residential area."

Hats Off!

It's a three-peat. The City won its third consecutive Texas Municipal League Award of Excellence in 1999. The latest award recognized the City's innovative approach to the City Council agenda. Utilizing information technology, the approach creates a "paperless" agenda and meeting process, provides an electronic means of distributing agenda packets to the council members and the public, and enables council members to read documents during meetings by means of a computer. Prior awards were for annexation management and public safety.



Police Officer Butch McAllister, Community Development Director Karen Glynn, and City Secretary Glenda Gundermann display the three TML awards.



City Manager David Neeley, Parks and Rec Director Lemuel Randolph, Parks Development Manager Joe Chesser, and Deputy City Manager Allen Bogard show off their awards at Sugar Lakes Park.

Parks and Recreation recently received the Gold Medal Award for Excellence in the Field of Recreation and Park Management from the Texas Recreational and Parks Society (TRAPS).

The Award, considered the most prestigious of all the TRAPS honors, recognizes accomplishments in: Needs assessment, long-range planning and degree of completion, scope of facilities, challenges met, project development, funding, program participation levels, number of personnel, evaluative tools, professional development and training, marketing, previous awards won, and involvement in TRAPS.

The department also won a TRAPS regional "Innovations in Budgeting Award" for developing a budgeting system that saves the City time and money.

CITY COUNCIL

Dean A. Hrbacek

Mayor

Mary Von Tungeln

Councilmember-At-Large
Position One

Clyde E. Jacks

Councilmember-At-Large
Position Two

Don Smithers

Councilmember
District One
Mayor Pro-Tem

Cyril Hosley

Councilmember
District Two

J. Brian Gaston

Councilmember
District Three

James A. Thompson

Councilmember
District Four

CITY STAFF

David Neeley

City Manager

Allen Bogard

Deputy City Manager

Karen Glynn

Director of Community Development

Earnest Taylor

Police Chief

John Wu

Fire Chief

Joe Morris

City Attorney

Glenda Gundermann

City Secretary

The City of Sugar Land's community newsletter is written and published by the City of Sugar Land. Please address any comments to the Communications Department, City of Sugar Land, P.O. Box 110, Sugar Land, TX 77478-0110.

For more information about the City of Sugar Land, please visit our web site at www.ci.sugar-land.tx.us, or call

City Hall	281-275-2700
Citizen Action Center	281-ASK-CITY (281-275-2489)
Job Hotline	281-275-2796





Sgt. Angie Womble and Officer Jerry Moffett welcome Assistant Chief of Police Michael Van Court.



Meet Michael Van Court—

Prior to joining the City as Assistant Chief of Police, long-time Sugar Land resident Van Court was Assistant Chief of Police for the University of Houston-Downtown. He also served 23 years with the Houston Police Department, where he gained experience with general and helicopter patrol, tactical unit coordination, narcotic investigations and special task forces.

Van Court holds a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice from the University of Houston-Downtown and a master's degree in Criminal Justice Management from Sam Houston State University in Huntsville.



Sugar Land detectives and police officers are participating in a county-wide truancy round up where they find juveniles who should be attending class and return them to school.



We Took a Bite Out of Crime—

Overall, crime in residential and commercial areas of the City decreased by five percent in 1999 from the previous year. Non-violent crimes decreased by 14% in the business areas. However, in residential areas, non-violent crimes increased by 16% due mainly to more reported theft-related cases.

During 1999, the number of minor auto collisions increased by four percent in comparison to 1998, and major collisions increased nearly 23%. Heavy traffic conditions on Highway 59 caused by the construction have contributed to these increases in collisions.



The Greater Harris County 9-1-1 selected Sugar Land to be a test and tour site for its new 9-1-1 system. The new system, to be installed on May 1, will identify the location of a cellular telephone caller.

Sprinklers a Plus

Do you believe that water from sprinklers causes more damage than a fire? Not so.

An Arizona study showed that, in over 90% of sprinkler activations, one sprinkler could control a fire. One-sprinkler deposited about 276 gallons of water, compared to about 4,800 gallons of spray from fire department hoses.

According to the National Fire Protection Association, about 20 people die each year in sprinklered buildings, compared to about 8,000 who die in unsprinklered buildings.

For more information, link to the City's web site at www.ci.sugarland.tx.us. Click on "Fire," and then on "Fire Safety Information."



Yes, it's that time to "sprint forward." You adjusted the time April 1, now spend some time changing the batteries in your smoke detectors—and don't forget to test them while you're at it. Sleep tight.

New Fire Station Under Review

To improve the response time for emergency calls in Sugar Land, City Council has identified the need for a fifth fire station in the City. The new station, to be located at Commonwealth and Elkins, would serve the Commonwealth, Sweetwater and Avalon communities. The station is expected to respond to approximately 300 to 400 calls per year, including those received from the new University of Houston-Sugar Land branch. This would be the first station built since May 1994. The call volume for the fire department has increased over 73% since that time. The projected date for opening is July 2001.



Sugar Land Road Work...

Two Ramps Shut Temporarily... As U.S. Highway 59 roadwork continues, the southbound exit ramp of Corporate Drive and the northbound entrance ramp at Kirkwood Drive will be closed. These ramps are expected to be closed through May 1.



Executive Drive Closes Permanently... On April 19, Executive Drive will no longer access U.S. 90A as the State develops the U.S. 59 and U.S. 90A interchange. This permanent closure is part of the development of a tri-level interchange, which will add frontage roads to serve both U.S. 59 and U.S. 90A.



The U.S. 59 frontage roads will extend over Oyster Creek between Williams Trace and State Highway 6.

Teamwork works... Through a cooperative effort among the state, county, and the cities of Sugar Land, Stafford and Meadows, all four lanes at the intersection at Dairy Ashford and West Airport are now open.

Green Space Grows

The City of Sugar Land recently received a 50-acre site for the future development of a permanent public park. The property, which is being donated by long-time area resident Ms. Virginia Duhacsek, contains numerous pecan and oak trees.

Walter W. and Virginia W. Duhacsek bought the property, located at the intersection of Voss and Old Richmond Road, in the mid 1950's when access to the property was over dirt roads.







Mayor Dean Hrbacek thanks Mrs. Duhacsek.

Growing By Leaps & Bounds

Cooperation and coordination are necessities in a period of tremendous growth for the City. To ensure continued quality development, the City Manager has established the City of Sugar Land Development Committee. Representatives from the Development community, the City's Planning & Zoning Commission and the City staff are meeting to exchange information and ideas. They aim to improve and/or clarify the City's development process, requirements, and standards. The Committee works toward a consensus building format to make recommendations to the City Manager's Office.

Top 10 things to do if you find yourself sitting in traffic—

1. Learn a second language as you listen to the audiobook checked out from the Sugar Land or First Colony libraries. 
2. Pull off and eat at one of over 70 area restaurants. 
3. Visualize fishing at Eldridge Park's lake.
4. Make a mental shopping list of the items you want to buy at First Colony Mall.
5. Quiet squirming children in the backseat with news that you are headed to Fort Bend County Museum.
6. Decide which neighborhood park your family will visit this weekend. 
7. Scrape off the old Gold Texas Conservation windshield decal and put on the new one. (You can now enter any Texas State Park by car.)
8. Call Imperial Sugar from your car phone to learn their tour schedule.
9. Replay that crucial hole in last weekend's golf game and plan your strategy for next weekend. 
10. Re-enact your favorite space mission aboard a simulated space craft found at the Museum of Natural Science.

City Elections Cancelled

Sugar Land has cancelled an election for May 6, 2000 to elect a mayor and two council members to at-large positions because candidates who filed for these positions are unopposed.

State law provides that a City Council may elect each unopposed candidate to a position, canceling the municipal election.

Each of the following unopposed candidates are declared elected to the following positions of the City Council for a two-year term commencing May 16, 2000:

Mayor

Dean A. Hrbacek

Dean Hrbacek, attorney, C.P.A., and mediator, has been a resident of Sugar Land for 13 years and currently is serving his fourth year as mayor, after having served three years as a councilmember. He earned a bachelor of science in accounting from the University of Houston at Clear Lake and a doctorate of jurisprudence from the University of Houston. He is board certified in tax law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization. His professional affiliations include the Fort Bend County Bar Association and the State Bar of Texas.

Hrbacek is a director of the Fort Bend Republican Men's Club and the Houston-Galveston Area Council, and is a member of the Sugar Land Rotary Club and the Fort Bend Chamber of Commerce.

Hrbacek and his wife Jenny have been married 18 years and have three children. He is a member of Christ United Methodist Church and is a First Colony Little League Coach.



Council Member At-Large Position One

James A. Thompson

James (Jimmy) is in his fourth year on the City Council. He has served as mayor pro-tem, and is on the Board of Directors for Sugar Land 4B Corporation. He has been extensively involved with the Municipal Airport Advisory Board, and has served on the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction Committee, Surface Water Committee, Annexation Committee, and Cable Franchise Committee. Jimmy is also the alternate liaison to the Houston-Galveston Area Council.

Thompson is president of Team Associates, Inc. He, his wife, and three children have been Sugar Land residents since 1978.



Council Member At-Large Position Two

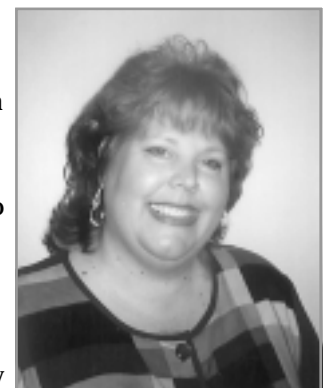
Karyn K. Dean

Karyn Dean is a native Houstonian and moved to Sugar Land in 1982. Karyn and her husband Terry have been married for 19 years and have two children. After being in the computer industry for over 10 years, she started her own computer consulting business. Karyn has currently put her business on hold to volunteer and raise her children.

Karyn dedicates many hours to volunteering in her community and schools. For nearly two years, Karyn has served as a Planning and Zoning Commissioner for Sugar Land. She has also served as president of The Commonwealth Civic Association for over four years and was director of First Colony MUD 3 for five years. Karyn, who is involved with the Fort Bend Chamber of Commerce, is a graduate of the Chamber's Leadership 2000 program. She is vice president of the Fort Bend Exchange Club and vice chair for Fort Bend Senior Citizens, Inc.

Karyn states that her combined experience in business, financial management and community involvement gives her the expertise needed to be on City Council. Karyn is ready to step forward to ensure that Sugar Land continues to take a strong leadership role in the many issues that face the City.

With the belief that Sugar Land is best governed by people with a sincere desire to serve the community, Karyn is confident and eager to meet the challenges that will be presented as a City Council Representative. Karyn welcomes questions or concerns from Sugar Land residents. She may be contacted at <http://home.flash.net/~kraftykk/>.



Take Me Out to the Ball Game

Birds are chirping, flowers are blooming, and baseballs are in the air. With the beginning of Spring came a new baseball park, Pony League Field.

The new park, which is located at First Colony Athletic Park on Austin Parkway between Williams Trace and Settlers Way, is the City's latest athletic facility. It boasts a practice infield, fully lighted playing field, and high outfield fence. The center and right fields are significantly shorter than the rest of the outfield because of space constraints, so batters must hit the ball farther than the distance of the high fence to hit a home run.

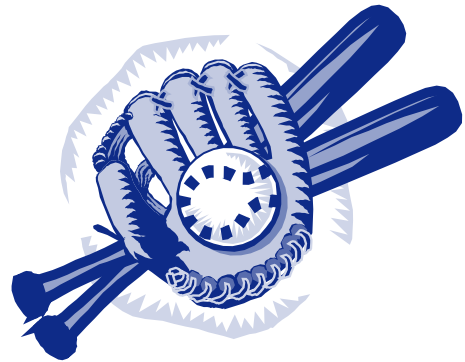
The City also installed new lights at Dad's Pitch Field, located at City Park on Wood and 7th Street. Additions and improvements to the City's ballparks are being made in response to the growing number of participants in baseball leagues.



The 2000 baseball season kicks off with a parade at City Park.



Councilmembers at park dedication.



Girls softball teams show that they are ready to play ball.



Benefits of Tax Abatement

What is tax abatement and why is it good for Sugar Land?

A tax abatement is a type of financial incentive to build or develop property in a community. Sugar Land uses two forms of tax incentives: tax abatement and tax increment reinvestment zone/tax increment financing (TIRZ/TIF). Both are valuable tools.

Tax abatement may be for residential (i.e. homestead or over 65 exemptions) or commercial property (i.e. buildings or equipment) where a portion of the taxes from a property is not collected. Businesses look at tax abatement as a leveling force when comparing operating costs in different communities.

TIRZ/TIF, on the other hand, is used for the development or redevelopment of a defined area. Taxes are collected, but a part or all of those taxes collected from the City, County, Levee Improvement District and Municipal Utility District may be redirected to pay for specific costs associated with that TIRZ/TIF project. For example, a real estate developer may not invest in a project if the return on the investment is too low. However, if a community feels that the project will positively affect their area, a TIRZ/TIF can be used to pay for costs on a specified list of items. This will reduce the developer's costs and make projects possible.

Why are Tax Abatement and TIRZ/TIF's important as a business incentive?

These tools are important because they aid a community in retaining and expanding existing businesses as well as recruiting new businesses to the area. Unlike residential development, commercial development brings in more revenue to a community. Therefore, a community that applies a good tax abatement policy strengthens its economic base.

In short, property tax abatement benefits residents by increasing the tax base for the long term benefit. In Sugar Land, the total amount abated is split nearly equally between residential abatement (52%) and commercial abatement (48%). Since 1990, the City of Sugar Land has granted nearly 40 tax abatements to qualifying businesses. These projects have added nearly \$470,000,000 in ad valorem property value to the tax roles in Sugar Land and Fort Bend County. In Sugar Land that means an additional \$1,670,000 in revenues per year.

Says Economic Development Director Joe Esch—

"Economic development does not make a bad project good, it makes a good project possible. Tax incentives are one way of reducing the costs of development and increasing the returns to make them more palatable to the investment market."



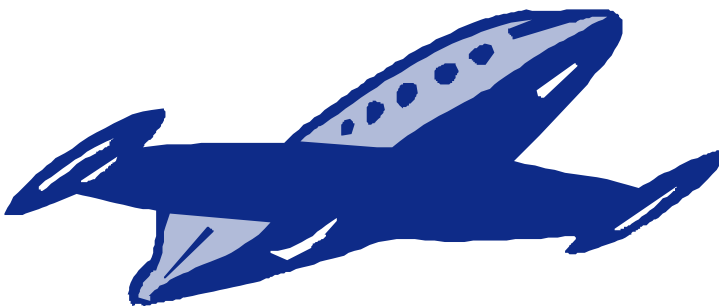
Economic Development Director Joe Esch, Western Airways President George Dodge, Airport Director Phillip Savko discuss the development plans for the new hangar.

Municipal Airport Flying High

Did you know the Sugar Land Municipal Airport is the fourth largest facility in the greater Houston metropolitan area and the only general aviation reliever airport in the southwest?

Western Airways, Inc., one of the largest aircraft charters and management services in the Houston metropolitan area, is consolidating its operations and moving more than 20 aircraft from other Houston-area airports to the Sugar Land Municipal Airport. With this move, Western Airways said it plans to start immediate construction of a 27,600 square foot hangar and office structure on the east side of the airport. Construction will take five months to complete. The Sugar Land City Council approved the 30-year lease for 1.2 acres, with two, five-year options.

The property taxes on the fleet will add a total of nearly half a million dollars in revenue to the city, county, and school district. The City will receive roughly \$435,000 a year in taxes, fuel revenues, and fees as a result of Western Airways move to the City. The move also will require hiring 20 more personnel.



W-A-T-E-R We Talking About?

A fun-filled, informative day will take place on Sunday, May 7—when the City simultaneously celebrates Public Works Week, Water Week and Earth Day.

Sugar Land hosts this event to inform residents about City department services, water conservation and protection, and recycling techniques. City departments and local vendors will display their services and offer giveaways. Come out and enjoy the music, fish release, games, costumed characters, and free food.

The fun takes place from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at First Colony Community Services Association Aquatic Center, 4350 Austin Parkway. If local businesses, schools, or civic organizations would like a booth at the event, please call the Public Works Department at 281-275-2450.



Carlos Garcia and son, Mark, tried out the fishing at the City of Sugar Land last year's Annual Water Week Celebration held at Eldridge Park.

Open Gym is... Open

First Colony Middle School hosts an After School Open Gym through May 18. The gym is open to all First Colony and Sugar Land Middle School students Monday through Thursday from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.



Defense action

Word Scramble

Unscramble these words to make several Sugar Land street names (answers are at the bottom of the page).

dienmtpo

nohre

dowsaem

dooniw

nna broar

hreso ehso

alaeaz

gsura ecerk

lleuds

ynafift

Calendar of Events Parks and Recreation Department

May:

- 1 Swim Lesson Registration Begins
- 11 Parks Board Meeting
- 18 After School Program Ends
- 26 Seniors Trip to Lake Jackson
- 27 City Municipal Pool Opens
- 29 Memorial Day-City Offices Closed

June:

- 5 Summer Day Camp Begins
- 5 Summer Open Gym Begins
- 6 Learn to Swim Session I Begins
- 7 Parks Board Meeting
- 20 Learn to Swim Session II Begins
- 22 Seniors Ice Cream Social

Exploring Unexplored Areas

Teenagers between the ages of 13 and 15 are welcome to sign up for Explorer Camp. The group will explore the upper Texas Gulf Coast area, where children will have the opportunity to tour and learn more about the area in which they live. Field trips in and around Sugar Land will broaden teen knowledge in such areas as business, the environment and the arts.

There will be four one-week sessions offered, beginning in June. Camp runs from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., and registration is \$150 for residents. Extended Explorer Camp is also available. For more information regarding registration or payment, please call 281-275-2885.

EGG-citing Easter Egg Hunt

The City is “hopping” with excitement as it plans for its annual EGGS-travaganza in the Park festival.

The EGGS-travaganza takes place on Good Friday, April 21, from noon until 3 p.m. at Lost Creek Park, Lexington Boulevard and Settlers Way Boulevard. There will be “moon walks,” a petting zoo, hayrides and the Easter Bunny at the event. All Sugar Land children, young and old, are invited to attend.

Would you like to be some-bunny special? Parks and Recreation needs volunteers to assist with the Easter egg hunt. You may sign up for a shift by calling 281-275-2885.

Bill Heard Chevrolet is a Velvet Rabbit Sponsor, donating \$2,500 to offset event costs.



“You mean there is candy inside for me to enjoy, too?”

Don't Mess With Sugar Land

Keep Sugar Land Beautiful, the City's new recycling organization, promotes environmental awareness, litter abatement, and beautification projects in the area with the following events:

- Spring cleaning includes getting rid of used paint cans. Completely dried paint cans may be set out for regular trash pickup. Paint was recycled on Saturday, April 15, in the Schlumberger parking lot. All usable paints were brought to the site, remixed and donated to Fort Bend County organizations. Residents also discarded used eyeglasses, hearing aids, car and household batteries, computer disks and cartridges.
- The 2000 Great American and Oyster Creek Cleanup was held on Saturday, April 1. Volunteers gathered at City Park, located at Wood and 7th Street. The clean up took place from 8:30 a.m. until noon, with lunch being served by local Lion's Club members.
- Pound nails and wield paintbrushes as part of the Hearts and Hammer Home Repair Project. The Repair Project assists the elderly, sick, and disabled in the area.



Melissa Hoffman, executive director of Keep Sugar Land Beautiful, gets the trash up and out.

To volunteer for the Repair Project, which takes place on April 29, please call Melissa Hoffman at 281-242-1164.



“Will you be my Valentine?”

They love me. They love me not. They love me....

Residents at the Sugar Land Oaks Guest Homes felt particularly loved on Valentines Day as senior citizens from the local recreational center brought them cards to celebrate the “sweet” day.

On February 14, about 30 senior citizens from the City's recreational center visited with 40 residents at Sugar Land Oaks Guest Homes. Some danced, some hugged, and some even exchanged pecks on the cheek.

Compost Happens

Free Master Composting Class Offered

The City of Sugar Land's Solid Waste Department will host free composting training in May. Participants will learn about the importance of conservation and preservation of natural resources through effective yard management methods.

To become a registered Master Composter with the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC), students will be responsible for 20 hours of classroom training. This training will include information on recycling, mulching, backyard composting, integrated pest management, landscape design, xeriscaping, and yard care. An additional 20 hours of service, ranging from teaching new students to overseeing the Lost Creek demonstration site, is also required. Participants will also complete a portion of their service hours by practicing what they learned at sites around the City of Sugar Land.

Class will be held Thursday, May 18 and 25, from 6:30-10 p.m., and Saturday, May 27, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Lost Creek Park Pavilion, 3703 Lost Creek Blvd. Students must pre-register, and class is limited to 30 participants. They will also receive written materials and a compost bin to take home.

For more information or to make reservations, contact the City of Sugar Land's Solid Waste Division at 281-275-2450.

A Date To Remember

April

14	Citizen's Police Academy 26 th Graduation
18	City Council Meeting
19	Senior Easter Egg Hunt
21	Easter Egg Hunt - City offices closed
25	City Council Meeting

May

2	City Council Meeting
7	Water Week and Earth Day
15	55 Alive Mature Driving Class
16	55 Alive Mature Driving Class
16	City Council Meeting
23	City Council Meeting
29	Memorial Day - City offices closed

Composting Class

Thursday, May 18 - 6:30-10:00 p.m.
Thursday, May 25 - 6:30-10:00 p.m.
Saturday, May 27 - 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
Lost Creek Park Pavilion
3703 Lost Creek Blvd.



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